

Message Text

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NO. 20 FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JAMES RESTON OP-ED COLUMN THE NEW
YORK TIMES FRIDAY APRIL 1 HEADED "WHY MOSCOW FAILED."

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THE U.S. SOVIET MILITARY
ARMS CONTROL TALKS IN MOSCOW FAILED TO REACH AN AGREEMENT--
ALMOST HAD TO FAIL--AND WHY IT IS PROBABLY A GOOD IDEA THAT
THEY DID FAIL AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME.

3. IT WAS TOO EARLY IN THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN
WASHINGTON AND TOO LATE IN THE BREZHNEV REGIME IN MOSCOW TO
EXPECT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S BOLD DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS
WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE SOVIET LEADERS IN THE POLITBURO,
WHO DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT MR. CARTER MEANT, OR HOW LONG
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GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV WOULD LAST.

4. BEFORE SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE WENT TO MOSCOW,
PRESIDENT CARTER SUGGESTED THAT HE MAKE A PERSONAL POINT TO
MR. BREZHNEV AND FOREIGN MINISTER ANDREI GROMYKO: NAMELY,
THAT THERE WAS A LIMITED TIME IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF A NEW
ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON WHEN A NEW PRESIDENT COULD TAKE

BOLD INITIATIVES ON FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS LIKE DISARMAMENT AND GET THE SUPPORT OF THE SENATE. BUT LATER ON, IT MIGHT BE MORE DIFFICULT TO GET CONFIRMATION BY A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF ANY DRAMATIC ARMS-CONTROL TREATY.

5. TIMING WAS CRITICAL, ACCORDING TO THIS THESIS. AFTER THE PRESIDENT PUT HIS ENERGY PROGRAM BEFORE THE CONGRESS-- WITH HIGH PENALTIES ON BIG CARS AND MAYBE A 25 CENT TAX ON EVERY GALLON OF GAS--HIS POPULARITY AND AUTHORITY WOULD DECLINE, SO THE TIME TO ACT ON ARMS CONTROL WAS NOW.

6. NO DOUBT SECRETARY VANCE DELIVERED PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE, BUT THE SOVIETS SAID "NYET" TO EVERYTHING, AND AGREED ONLY TO SET UP COMMITTEES TO STUDY THE PROBLEMS AND TALK ABOUT THEM IN MAY AT GENEVA.

7. THERE IS ONE VIEW THAT THEY REJECTED MR. CARTER'S PROPOSALS AND DIDN'T EVEN COME BACK WITH ANY NEW PROPOSALS OF THEIR OWN BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO REBUKE HIM FOR CRITICIZING THEIR VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT THEY PROBABLY HAD MORE IMPORTANT REASONS.

8. PRESIDENT CARTER PUT FORWARD IN HIS FIRST FEW WEEKS IN OFFICE THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY ARMS PROPOSAL SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE COLD WAR. AS HE DEFINED IT AFTER THE MOSCOW TALKS, "IT WAS TO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS IN THE LEVEL OF DEPLOYMENT OF MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND THE MIRV MISSILES BELOW THE 2,400 LEVEL AND THE 1,320 LEVEL THAT WERE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENTS.
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9. "SECONDLY," THE PRESIDENT SAID, "TO STOP THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF ANY NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS. A THIRD POINT WAS TO FREEZE AT THE PRESENT LEVEL ABOUT 550 INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES, OUR MINUTEMAN AND THEIR MISSILES KNOWN AS THE SS-17, 18 AND 19..."

10. THERE WAS MUCH MORE THAN THIS--BANNING SOVIET MOBILE MISSILES, AND STRICT LIMITS ON OUR CRUISE MISSILE AND THEIR BACKFIRE BOMBER--ALL OF WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN WEEKS TO DEFINE LET ALONE SETTLE.

11. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION DIDN'T EVEN GET ITS OWN FOLKS TOGETHER ON WHAT IT WANTED TO SUGGEST TO THE SOVIETS UNTIL A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, OR EXPLAIN ITS POLICY ADEQUATELY TO THE SENATE LEADERS WHO WOULD HAVE TO APPROVE ANY ARMS ACCORD.

12. SO IT'S NO WONDER THAT MR. VANCE DIDN'T GET AN INSTANT

AGREEMENT IN MOSCOW, AND A GOOD THING TOO. "WE HAVE PROPOSED TO THE SOVIET LEADERS IN THE LAST TWO DAYS," MR.

CARTER SAID AFTER MR. VANCE LEFT MOSCOW, "A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF AGREEMENTS WHICH, IF CONCLUDED, WILL LAY A PERMANENT GROUNDWORK FOR A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD..."

13. YOU HAVE TO ADMIRE HIS DETERMINATION TO STOP FIDDLING WITH PHONY DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS THAT MERELY CONTINUE THE ARMS RACE AND START CUTTING THE ATOMIC MONSTERS DOWN TO SIZE, BUT THIS IS NOT THE SORT OF THING YOU SETTLE BETWEEN SUSPICIOUS STRANGERS IN A COUPLE OF DAYS.

14. ESPECIALLY IF MR. BREZHNEV'S HEALTH IS FAILING AS FAST AS IT APPEARS. HIS PHOTOGRAPHS WITH MR. VANCE IN MOSCOW SHOW A DRAMATIC CHANGE, LIKE ROOSEVELT AFTER YALTA OR PRESIDENT POMPIDOU OF FRANCE, BLOATED WITH DRUGS IN HIS UNCLASSIFIED

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LATTER YEARS.

15. THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTS THAT BREZHNEV'S MANNER WITH VANCE "WAS GRIM, HIS FACE PUFFY AND ASHEN, HIS MOVEMENTS AND HIS SPEECH SLURRED..." SO THERE ARE PERSONAL AS WELL AS OBJECTIVE REASONS FOR AVOIDING "PERMANENT" SOLUTIONS TO FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS LIKE ARMS CONTROL.

16. MOSCOW WAITED A LONG TIME TO SEE HOW THE UNITED STATES WAS GOING TO PASS POWER FROM ONE PRESIDENT TO ANOTHER, AND WASHINGTON IS ALSO PROBABLY GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT A WHILE NOW TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS AFTER BREZHNEV. THE HISTORICAL RECORD IS NOT REASSURING. EVERY SUCCESSOR TO LENIN, OR STALIN, OR MALENKOV, OR KHRUSCHEV HAD TO HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES, AND THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR DISARMAMENT HAS NEVER BEEN EXCESSIVE.

17. SO THE SO-CALLED "FAILURE" OF THE VANCE MISSION TO MOSCOW IS A LITTLE COMPLICATED. IT IS NOT TO BE EXPLAINED BY JIMMY CARTER'S EVANGELICAL SERMONS ON "HUMAN RIGHTS"--THOUGH THESE HAVE NEITHER CONVERTED NOR AMUSED THE POLITBURO--OR BY THE ILLNESS OF BREZHNEV, THOUGH THIS MAKES THEM WONDER ABOUT THE FUTURE.

18. PROBABLY THE MAIN THING IS THAT MR. CARTER PUT FORTH A REALLY REVOLUTIONARY ARMS REDUCTION PROGRAM BEFORE HIS OWN COUNTRY, LET ALONE THE SOVIETS, KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING, SO THEY HAVE AGREED TO THINK ABOUT IT LATER, WHICH IS PROBABLY NOT A BAD IDEA.
CHRISTOPHER

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